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gether and to subdue the whole of the universe to his personal control. But he is at the same time utterly incapable of controlling his own gigantic strength. Hence he provokes the whole earth against himself ("Mother Earth could not bear his weight"):

He saddled his heroic steed
And rode forth on his way.
His young heart was throbbing,
His strength vibrated in his sinews,
His energy was like to overflow,
And he was heavily burdened with his strength,
Heavily burdened as with a grievous load;
He could not control his heroic strength.
And he threw away his steel club
Which vanished out of sight about the clouds,
And caught it again in his white hand;
"If I should take to walking on the earth
I would fasten a ring to heaven,
I would bind an iron chain to the ring,
I would drag the sky down to mother earth
I would turn the earth on its end,
And I would confound earth with heaven."[31]

There is no deed that these warriors and bandits would hesitate to commit in order to increase their personal power. The Great-Russian folk narratives agree with the early Russian chronicles and with later Russian historical documents that these men were ready to murder even their own closest kin in order to achieve their personal aims. In a folk epic this extreme bloodthirstiness and quest for power is symbolized by young Shchelkun, a hero of Tartar origin who murders his own son, and then, like the Scythians of old, drinks his blood. By this act of extreme cruelty he seeks his own self-aggrandizement:

Stab your son
Your beloved son,
Fill a bowl of his blood,
Drink up this blood,
This warm blood,
And then I will grant you

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Tver the ancient,
Tver the wealthy,
And the two brothers,
The two bold Borisovichi.
At once young Schelkun
Stabbed his son,
Filled a bowl of his blood,
His warm blood,
And drank up the bowl of that warm blood:
And straightway Tsar Azvych
Bestowed upon him
Tver the ancient,
Tver the wealthy,
And the two brothers,
The two bold Borisovichi.[32]

However, as soon as such "Good bold youths who have robbed and slain" find themselves in circumstances which appear to be unsurmountable, they are inclined to become cowardly, are overwhelmed with gloom and fear, and tend to rely on crouching servility and on guile and cunning as a means of self-preservation. When in such a mood they picture their enemies as superhuman, beastly beings possessing supernatural strength, thus justifying the lack of fair play in dealing with them.

It is possible that this radical change of social structure was projected into the new folk concept of the supernatural world. The Old-Slavonic fairyland inhabited predominantly by benevolent spirits was apparently transformed under the new conditions into a demonland full of beings with terrifying and macabre qualities. Blood-sucking vampires, heart-devouring witches, fiends that feast on human flesh, and other murderous and rapacious beings similar to those found in the underworld of the steppe nomads replaced the Old-Slavonic helpful deities and moderately malignant spirits.

In the same manner the Old-Slavonic benevolent wizards apparently evolved into rapacious and slaughterous witches who specialize in child eating. The Old-Slavonic beautiful and benevolent water spirits developed into monsters who bewitch people, especially the youths, and then draw them down into the deep waters to put them to death. The Old-Slavonic friendly and